

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----058000 311307Z /43

O P 311253Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4685
AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY GABORONE PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 05050

EXDIS

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

LAGOS FOR YOUNG AND MOOSE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PDEV, RH, UK
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: BRITISH RESPONSE TO OUR PROPOSED
NEGOTIATING STRATEGY

REF: A) STATE 81715; B) LAGOS 4001

1. WE THINK REFTTEL B MAY REFLECT SOME MISUNDERSTANDING
OF BRITISH POSITION ON HOW TO RESPOND TO THE FRONTLINE
PROPOSAL THAT THE US AND UK MEET WITH THE PATRIOTIC
FRONT AND THEN MOVE ON TO AN ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE.

2. IN THE BRITISH VIEW, ONE PURPOSE OF THE GRAHAM-
LOW MISSION WOULD BE TO ESTABLISH THE MODALITIES OF A
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PRELIMINARY CONFERENCE WITH THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. THESE
WOULD INCLUDE NOT ONLY TIME AND PLACE BUT ALSO AGREEMENT
THAT SUCH A MEETING WOULD LEAD PROMPTLY TO AN ALL-PARTIE
CONFERENCE (THE TERMS FOR WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE AGREED
UPON BETWEEN GRAHAM/LOW AND THE PF). THE BRITISH BELIEV
THE FRONTLINE HAS LAID DOWN A CONDITION: NO ALL-PARTIES
CONFERENCE WITHOUT FIRST MEETING THE PF. THE BRITISH

WANT TO CONFIRM THAT THE REVERSE OF THIS LINKAGE IS ALSO TRUE: NO MEETING WITH THE PF WITHOUT A SUBSEQUENT ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE. GRAHAM AND LOW WOULD SEEK THAT COMMITMENT DIRECTLY FROM THE PATRIOTIC FRONT.

3. GRAHAM AND LOW WOULD ALSO PROBE WHETHER IN FACT THE PF IS PREPARED TO SEEK GENUINE AGREEMENT AT A RECONSTITUTED MALTA. THE FRONTLINE INDICATES THIS IS THE CASE, BUT THE BRITISH ARE SKEPTICAL THAT THE PF IS INDEED WILLING TO ACCEPT THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS. THEY RECOGNIZE REAL CONCESSIONS WOULD ONLY COME AT A MINISTERIAL MEETING BUT WOULD LIKE AT LEAST SOME INDICATION FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH THAT THE PF HAS FLEXIBLE VIEWS ON THE POWERS OF THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER, THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL, THE ROLE OF THE UN, AMNESTY, ETC.

4. GRAHAM AND LOW WOULD OF COURSE ALSO TRY TO SELL THE IDEA OF A CONFERENCE TO THE SALISBURY GROUP, WHICH IS NOT EXPECTED TO BE AN EASY TASK.

5. THE VANCE-OWEN MEETING WITH THE PF WOULD HAVE THE SAME TERMS OF REFERENCE AS THE MALTA MEETING. FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW, THE MEETING WOULD BE ON THE BASIS OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS. THE FRONTNOW CONFIDENTIAL

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CLAIMS IT IS NEGOTIATING WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THOSE

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PROPOSALS, BUT THE BRITISH BELIEVE THE FRONT HAS SO FAR FAILED TO ACCEPT THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF OUR PLAN. STILL, THE TERMS WOULD BE THE SAME AS MALTA.

6. TO TELL PARTICIPANTS, HOWEVER, THAT THE SUBSEQUENT ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE WOULD BE "BASED ON THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS" IS NOT CORRECT, AND THE BRITISH WOULD REGARD THIS AS SERIOUS BACKPEDDLING BY US ON THE UNDERSTANDING OWEN REACHED WITH SECRETARY VANCE ON MARCH 8. FOR AN ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE, THERE WOULD BE NO EFFORT TO ESTABLISH TERMS OF REFERENCE OR TO CHARACTERIZE THE POSITION OF ANY PARTY. THE US AND UK WOULD COME ON THE BASIS OF OUR PROPOSALS, WHICH WE STAND BY, AND THE OTHER PARTIES WOULD COME WITH THEIR POSITIONS. OWEN BELIEVES HE AGREED WITH VANCE THAT TO INSIST AN ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE BE "BASED ON THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS" MEANS THE CONFIDENTIAL

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SALISBURY GROUP SIMPLY WOULD NOT COME, AND THE PROSPECTS FOR A CEASEFIRE AND A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION WOULD NOT BE ADVANCED.

7. RE PARA 2 OF REFTTEL B, OWEN'S IDEA OF MEETING AT THE ZAMBIA/RHODESIA BORDER HAS ALWAYS HELD SOME ATTRACTION FOR HIM AND HE RECOGNIZES THAT FINDING A PLACE ACCEPTABLE TO EVERYONE HAS PLAGUED PREVIOUS EFFORTS TO ARRANGE TALKS. HIS POSITION, HOWEVER, AS STATED IN REFTTEL A IS, "I AM RELAXED ABOUT THE VENUE AND WOULD FIT IN WITH VANCE'S ARRANGEMENT."

8. OWEN'S FULL REMARKS ON RHODESIA IN HIS PILGRIM'S SPEECH ARE CONTAINED IN LONDON 4091 OF WHICH LAGOS IS AN ADDRESSEE.

9. COMMENT: THE PROBLEM HERE IS LINKING TWO MEETINGS WHICH ARE CHARACTERIZED IN TWO DIFFERENT WAYS.

THE BRITISH ARE PREPARED TO CALL THE MEETING WITH THE
PF "BASED ON THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS," BUT INSIST
THAT WE STICK WITH THE FORMULA AGREED IN WASHINGTON FOR
CONVENING AN ALL PARTIES CONFERENCE. THE FRONTLINE
APPEARS TO HAVE ESTABLISHED THE LINKAGE BETWEEN THE
TWO MEETINGS AND THE BRITISH HAVE SEIZED ON IT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LONDON05050
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780140-0146
Format: TEL
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978034/aaaaacxg.tel
Line Count: 176
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5278c1bf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 STATE 81715, 78 LAGOS 4001
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3246235
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RHODESIA: BRITISH RESPONSE TO OUR PROPOSED NEGOTIATING STRATEGY
TAGS: PDEV, RH, UK, US
To: STATE LAGOS
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5278c1bf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014